S A N A T A N

Pratnakirttimapavrinu
(Let us attempt to unravel the glorious past – *Rigveda*)

Editor
Dr Alok Tripathi

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Mandi : Monolithic temple (source : O.C. Handa, 2009)

South **A**sian **N**etwork of **A**rcheologists/academicians for **T**echnical and **A**rtistic **N**urturing

"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they do not have any."
- Alice Walker

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

Dear Colleagues

Your willingness to share your knowledge and thoughts, in the form of your contributions, and free and frank views to Sanatan is getting appreciation from all. Sanatan would be a success if it continues providing a forum for all to express their views. In our previous few issues we have discussed some of the contentious issues. Whereas most are appreciative to find a forum for expression of views some reactions from some of the quarters were as expected. There are still a few who believe more in persons than the facts or evidence.

We all do believe in continuation of certain great traditions which are good for academics and for the society. But all old traditions are not good traditions. All such traditions which create hurdles in the progress of knowledge and free expressions of sincere views and doubts need to be debated, examined and get rid of.

Editor

RESEARCHES

Ardhnarishwar Monolith Discovered at Mandi

A popular legend about Mandi says, "*Kasi assi ta Mandi kassi*", i.e. while there are eighty temples at Kashi, Mandi has eighty-one. In fact, Mandi town has been popularly known as the *Paharan ri Kashi,* i.e. Kashi of the hills or the *Chhoti Kashi* for the concentration of classical temples made of stones. An addition to that number was made by a discovery of an ancient and rare monolith temple of Ardhnarishwar by the author in the town on 6th February 2009 near the *sangam* (confluence) of Beas and Suketi rivers near the legendry *Chakadini Jaan* opposite to the famous Panchvaktra Mahadeva temple.



Mandi : Monolithic temple of Ardhnarishwar (source : O.C. Handa, 2009)

This temple remained unknown and buried in the sand at the *sangam* for centuries, before the sand over it was washed away by the floods. However, nobody bothered about this rare monolithic temple. Even now, it is surrounded all over by the obnoxious garbage and filth that flows around it from the drains, emitting foul smell. The excreta of birds may be seen of the temple structure. This abject callousness of the people and authorities of the town is



Mandi : Panchvaktra Mahadeva temple (source : O.C. Handa, 2009)

Highly deplorable on the face of fact that this monolithic temple is a rare relic of great antiquity in the north of Vindhyachal Range. In Himachal Pradesh this recently discovered small temple is the only second of the type, the other being the famous monolith Thakurdwara at Masrur in Kangra, dated to 8th-9th century.

This rare temple is unique in several ways. With the exception of the Bhootnath temple, where lingam is the object of worship, in all the other early structural temples of Mandi devoted to Shiva, he is represented anthropomorphically, as we find it in the Trilokinath temple, Panchvaktra Mahadeva temple or the Ardhnarishwar temple. However, in this monolithic temple, the image is symbolically represented as lingam, enshrined in a plain and square sanctum. The lingam is installed on a *yoni-peetha*, encircled by *naga.* On the jambs, *dwarpalas* are depicted standing in attendance.

The *ardhanari* aspect of Shiva is only known by the two abstract symbolic representations. On one of these is the front frieze. On it, a bull representing the mount of Shiva is shown on the right. On the left, there is a couchant lion, representing *Vama Shakti*. In the middle of

these two zoomorphs, the classical *gawaksh* device is shown. The other and rather very interesting representation is the graceful and large couchant lion, seated on the back of shrine. On the back of this lion, *Shaktipad*, i.e. the feet of Shakti, are represented. The whole composition represents unification of Shiva and Shakti.

On the right side of the temple, Kartikeya is shown seated in a niche on an agile peacock. Below that representation, the striding elephants and lions are represented befitting his status as the commander of the army of gods. On the left side, Ganesha is seated in a niche. Under him, elephants are shown walking in a single file. Besides these representations, the exterior is embellished with the stylised *purna-ghat*, lotus and other classical devices.

This small monolithic temple has been chiselled out of a living sandstone rock on a rectangular plan. It measures, an average, 1.84 metre in length and 0.80 metre in width. Since, the upper part of this temple is extinct; it is not possible to ascertain its exact height. The temple faces northeast, similar to the structural Trilokinath and Panchvaktra Mahadeva temples.

To which period this temple belongs, cannot be said with certainty, but it is certain that this temple may predate the oldest of the structural temples at Mandi, placed around sixteenth century, when the present town is known to have been founded. In fact, before the town of Mandi was founded, this place had been an established *tantra-peetha*, i.e. the place



Mandi : Lingam in sanctum (source : O.C. Handa, 2009)



Mandi : Monolithic temple of Ardhnarishwar, right side (source : O.C. Handa, 2009)

for esoteric meditation for many centuries. The *Nanga-arjuna-ri-gupha*, i.e. the Cave of Nagarjuna (the great theoretician of *c.* first century CE) in the Tarna Hill, the shrine of Mandarava (popularly known as *Khuarani*), the consort of Padmsambhava (8th century CE) are some such archaeological evidences which affirm the antiquity of this place. The popular traditions of this town further lend credence to that fact.

Besides these, there still exist unmistakable archaeological evidence of the religio-artistic activity on the legendry *Chakadini Jaan* – the huge living rock on the *sangam.* Atop this rock, a huge lingam, hearths, steps and large pits chiselled and scooped out of this rock existed until recent past. Unfortunately, the upper part of that huge lingam is now lost to human callousness or natural vagaries. These relics may indicate that this rock was also being made into a monolithic temple, but remained incomplete for some unknown reason. Similarly, on the right bank of Beas little downstream of the *sangam*, a neglected cave, scooped out of the living rock, may be seen.

All that activity of creating monolithic shrines on the *sangam* close to each other may unmistakably indicate that this place at the confluence of two rivers had been an active and refulgent place of Shaiva esoteric culture.



Mandi : Chakdini Jaan (source : O.C. Handa, 2009)

On the stylistic consideration, this rock-cut temple may be placed around the 8th-9th century, when the distant echoes of post-Gupta artistic legacy could still be heard in the softer treatment of full and round figures. Emphasis on the abstract modes to representing Shiva-Shakti unification is not only rare, but unique too that in the mute eloquence speaks of the development of a highly classical and mature religio-artistic culture at Mandi.

This monolithic temple, though badly weathered and damaged, still preserves the nostalgic aurora of classicism. There is immediate need to conserve it in its place with adequate protective structures or to rehabilitate it at a safer location so that this outstanding and rare relic of the cultural history of this region is not lost to posterity. The Archaeological Survey of India or the State Department of Language, Art and Culture must act promptly to protect this important relic.

- O. C. Handa
Sanjauli, Shimla

Four Idols Found in the Melavalampettai Lake

Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu



Idols from Melavalampettai lake

Residents living near Melavalampettai lake while walking across the dry bed of the lake noticed a gunny sack partly buried. The curious residents pulled out the sack and found four idols – two of Vishnu and two of Goddess. The idols are in the custody of Madurantakam police station in Kancheepuram district.

Two idols of Vishnu measures 52 cm. and the other 45 cm. Other two idols of Goddess measure 45 cm. and 30 cm. The police is in touch with officials of the Archaeological Survey of India to establish their antiquity and provenance.

[*source : The Hindu, 19.03.2009*]

Cup Marks and Caves at Malayadipatti

Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu

A team of the Archaeological Survey of India chanced upon to uncover what could be evidence of the first artistic expression of prehistoric man in this region. The team visiting a protected monument in Pudukkottai to assess the damage caused by illegal granite quarrying found cup marks' or cupules, in a cave in a hillock in the remote Malayadipatti village, 35 km. north of Pudukkottai in Tamil Nadu. The team also found rock-paintings and stone-beds used by Jain preachers in three caves.

The 400-odd cup marks etched in a natural cave in Pudukkottai and tucked away on the roof surface have a smooth finish and are a few millimeters deep and wide. The cup marks are spread over 100 square feet area of the cave roof. These marks could date back to the Mesolithic culture.

The team also found three natural caves. One cave had a five-line inscription in ancient Brahmi script. It carried the name of an individual, *Picham-piran* (*piran* meaning chief or head and so believed to be a chieftain). Two caves had a Jain stone-bed in each and one had a fading rock-painting on the cave wall and the other the cup marks. Known locally as *samanar* (Jain) *padukkai* (beds), these beds were used by Jain preachers during the 3rd - 4th century CE. A fading white line-drawing depicts a bird and a human form.

[*source : Times of India, 23.03.2009*]

ASSIGNMENTS

Ms Madhu Bala, Superintending Archaeologist in the Archaeological Survey of India who was posted in the Excavation Branch at New Delhi retired on 31 March.

PUBLICATIONS

Quarterly Magazine on Archaeology

Sanatan has established as a forum for fast dissemination of information and academic discussions. Many publications started in the past could not be brought out regularly, even in a years time. There were also a general perception that publications on archaeology takes a long time and it is difficult to maintain their periodicity. *Sanatan* started as weekly and was later made fortnightly on the request of its members. It has since changed general perception of many towards publications on archaeology.

Recently, the Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India has decided to bring out a quarterly magazine on Archaeology. The magazine would be brought out in an attractive format. It would contain research articles, notes on recent researches and news on various activities in allied disciplines. The magazine would be available in both, electronic as well as in print, form. The purpose of the publication is to make authentic information available to researchers and academicians in time and also to inculcate the habit of writing among young researchers.

This initiative of the DG, ASI deserves high appreciation. It may be trusted that all the senior scholars as well as young researchers, field-workers and also amateurs would take benefit and contribute actively. Members may also suggest appropriate name for the magazine.

Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition

Macao, March 2009


A view of the Exhibition of Essence of Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage (source : Xinhua/Zhou Lei)

An Exhibition of Essence of Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage opened in Macao on 20 March 2009. The five-day exhibition was sponsored by China's Ministry of Culture, and co-hosted by various associations and governmental departments in the Chinese mainland and the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR). The theme of the exhibition was "Customs and Practices in Snow-capped Plateau", which featured a total of 99 exhibits of Tibetan cultural importance.


Tibetan opera masks (source : Xinhua/Zhou Lei)



The exhibition showcased Tibetan cultural classics, such as Thankas, golden Buddha statues, scriptures, Tibetan opera masks and precious historical records of Tibetan literature, music, dancing, and opera, etc. A total of 46 items of Tibetan dancing, music, opera, etc. are listed in China's intangible cultural heritage catalog.

Over a long historical period, the Tibetans created a rich and diversified culture with distinct characteristics, which not only include a large number of tangible cultural heritage, such as the world-renowned





Potala Palace, but a more comprehensive intangible cultural heritage in the forms of language and literature, opera and music, painting and sculpting, etc.







There are at least 2,330 registered historical sites of various types in Tibet, among which 329 had been put under protection at different levels, including 35 key ones under state protection, 112 under regional protection, and 182 under the protection of cities and counties by the end of 2006, according to the China's Information Office of the State Council. Southwestern China's Tibet Autonomous Region has enacted measures to conserve the UNESCO world heritage site Potala Palace, also a landmark religious complex, in the regional capital of Lhasa.

[*Source:*www.chinaview.cn]





MUSEUMS

New Medieval Gallery at the British Museum, London



The British Museum, London is home to over seven million objects including several incredible collections such as - the Rosetta stone, Roman artefacts, a collection of mummies, etc. The Museum is set to open four new galleries this year. One of them is a new Medieval Gallery, displaying some of the finest medieval objects, exciting art and archaeological treasures from 1050-1500 CE.



The incredible collection draws on some of the British Museum's best examples of British, European and Byzantine art from this period. Particular importance is placed on the Byzantine Empire's influence on the medieval world, and a dedicated section examines its role as a trading capital.

This new, permanent exhibition at the Museum explores the religious developments and cultural preoccupations of the medieval world. Exhibits include — paintings, jewellery and sculpture, with an emphasis on iconoclasm, which affected Byzantium and western Christendom equally. Highlights of the Gallery include - the Royal Gold Cup, made in Paris sometime between 1370-80; an intricately carved citole, a unique medieval musical instrument; the world-famous Lewis chessmen, dating back to around 1150-1200; a magnificent tiled pavement from Byland Abbey, North Yorkshire, etc.



[*source : http://www.visitlondon.com/events/detail/4763619*]

Archaeological Survey of India Museum

Archaeological Survey of India would be celebrating 150 years in 2011. On the occasion it is proposed to establish a museum showcasing the history and contributions of the Archaeological Survey of India. Suggestions from all the archaeologists are solicited.

CONFERENCE REPORT

National Seminar

History and Archaeology of Northern Madhya Pradesh

School of Study, Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Jiwaji University, Gwalior and Upadhyay Muni Sri Gyan Sagar Jain Shodh Sansthan, Gwalior jointly organized a National Seminar on History and Archaeology of Northern Madhya Pradesh at Gwalior on 20-21 March 2009. The seminar was inaugurated by Prof. C.D. Singh, Vice-Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak on 20th March at Galav Auditorium. Prof. A.K. Kapoor, Vice-Chancellor, Jiwaji University, Gwalior presided the inaugural function, which was attended by hundreds of academicians.



The seminar was attended by eminent scholars, archaeologists and researchers from the Archaeological Survey of India, State Archaeology Departments, universities and other research institutions. More than fifty research papers on various aspects of the history and

archaeology of Northern Madhya Pradesh were presented during the four technical sessions. A brief valedictory function was presided by Prof. S.D. Sharma, former head, AIHC and Archaeology, Jiwaji University, Gwalior.



- Navneet Kumar Jain
Director, UMSGSJ Shodh Sansthan, Gwalior

CONFERENCE / SEMINAR

Annual Conference on South Asia
Madison, USA, October 2009

The 38th Annual Conference on South Asia will be held on 22-25 October 2009 at the Madison Concourse Hotel in Madison, WI, USA. For more information regarding the conference, please visit http://southasiaconference.wisc.edu/index.html .

OPPORTUNITIES

Member Secretary, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts

Ministry of Culture, Government of India has invited applications in the prescribed proforma for the position of Member Secretary (PB-4, Rs. 37400-67000 + Grade Pay Rs. 12,000 or the Apex Scale of Rs. 80,000 fixed), in Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), an autonomous Trust under Ministry of Culture. The appointment will be on deputation or contract basis for a period not exceeding 5 years at a time depending upon the qualifications of the candidate selected.

The Member-Secretary is the Chief Executive Officer of the IGNCA. All decisions of the Trustees / Executive Committee are implemented through him. The officers and staff of the IGNCA are under the day-to-day administrative control, supervision and direction of the Member-Secretary. He exercises all such powers and authority as may be necessary for the purpose of executing the decisions and for the conduct and management of the offices of the IGNCA.

Age of the applicant should not exceed 60 years. He should have Doctorate degree in the discipline of Indian languages / Archaeology / Anthropology / Art-History / Ethnology / Humanities / Information Technology / Human Sciences, with 15 years' experience in - Teaching and research in a university or any well established institution devoted to higher learning; published research papers in reputed journals; administrative experience as head of university / department or of a national / international institute of advanced learning; capacity to guide and provide leadership for interdisciplinary academic work of a high order. However, qualifications, experience and age are relaxable at the discretion of the competent authority in case of candidates otherwise well qualified.

Those applying for deputation should be Senior Professor, Vice Chancellor and other persons holding posts at the highest level in university / institution of higher learning / academic institution / research institution or organization of national or international repute. Officers of the Central / State Government / Union Territory; autonomous organization of the Centre / State / Union Territory; Professor of university or chief of statutory organization who have worked or are working in posts in the pre-revised scale of Rs. 22,400-525-24,500, Rs. 26000/- (fixed) or the revised scale, PB-4, Rs. 37,400-67,000 + Grade Pay Rs. 12,000 or the apex scale of Rs. 80,000 (fixed) or officers under the Central Government / State Government / Union Territory / university / autonomous body or statutory organization, with at least five years of regular service in the pre-revised scale of Rs. 18,400-500-22,400 or the revised scale (PB-4) of Rs. 37,400-67000 + Grade Pay Rs. 10,000 or equivalent may also apply.

Applications should be sent to the Office of the President, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, C.V. Mess Building, Janpath, New Delhi – 110 001, so as to reach on or before 5th May, 2009. Application forms can be downloaded from www.ignca.nic.in .

LEAGAL ISSUES

Constructions near Golconda Fort Stayed

A Division Bench of the A.P. High Court made it clear that no constructions should take place near the Jamalikunta, Nayakhilla areas of Golconda fort and no activity which changes the contours should take place. The stay orders were given in a petition filed by Forum for Better Hyderabad and PUCAAR voluntary organizations.

The petitioners said that on an earlier occasion the court had made it clear that the works pertaining to golf course will be done by the A.P. Tourism Developmental Corporation strictly in terms of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

The petitioners said that without there being any clearance, and in violation of the rules, activity has been taken up for the last ten days, moat wall has been demolished, new structures have come up and large loads of mud and sand are being dumped in the fort.

The counsel for the golf said that the court had already passed orders on earlier occasion to protect the monument. He said that the present petition may not be entertained. The Bench asked the respondents not to take up construction or change the contours.

[*source : http://www.siasat.com 18.03.2009*]

Ancient monuments of national importance are governed by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. Under the powers conferred by the said Act 100 m. area adjoining the 'protected monuments' has been declared as prohibited area. **No construction or mining activities can be permitted in the prohibited area**.

PIL to Challenge Construction Work at Hoysaleshwara Temple in Halebeedu

The division bench of High Court while hearing a petition has directed the state and the Centre to file objections against a PIL challenging the construction work on the premises of Hoysaleshwara temple in Halebeedu. The petitioners argued that the Archaeological Survey of India had not taken any steps to prevent construction in the temple premises.

[*source : http://www.expressbuzz.com 21.03.2009*]

UNESCO

50th Anniversary of Nubia Campaign



UNESCO is commemorating the mammoth combined effort by archaeologists, engineers and researchers from across the globe which led to the salvaging of extraordinary temples and Pharaonicc monuments which would otherwise have disappeared under the waters of Lake Nasser with the construction of the Aswan High Dam. UNESCO, Egypt and Sudan have started commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Nubia Campaign, a defining example of international solidarity when countries understood the universal nature of heritage and the universal importance of its conservation.



The Egyptian and Sudanese governments' request - in April and October 1959 respectively - for UNESCO's help to save the 3,000-year-old monuments and temples of ancient Nubia from an area that was to be flooded by the Aswan Dam marked the start of unprecedented campaign. A moving demonstration of the miracles that can be achieved by international cooperation. Saving the temples and artefacts of Nubia had became an urgent priority and the international community brilliantly rose to that challenge. Such international solidarity is more needed in the current global, financial, environmental and social crisis.

International expertise and funds were mobilized to dismantle and reassemble six groups of monuments in new locations. The scale of the 20-year project and the immense technological challenge it generated were unprecedented in UNESCO's history. A total of 22 monuments and architectural complexes were relocated with the assistance of 40 technical missions from five continents.

The success of the Campaign inspired the development and adoption in 1972 of UNESCO's World Heritage Convention and the inscription of sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List on which the Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae were inscribed in 1979.

[source : http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/497]

UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY

An Ancient Fish-trap Discovered from Aerial Photographs at Poppit, Pembrokeshire, UK

A 260 m. V-shaped ancient fish-trap has been found in an estuary after it was spotted in aerial photographs on Google Earth. This huge man-made structure could be more than 1,000 years old. It was designed to catch migratory fish going up the River Teifi at Poppit in Pembrokeshire. Research is being undertaken by Pembrokeshire College and the Dyfed Archaeological Trust to find out more.



The submerged structure is possibly made of locally quarried rock. Fish-traps were a widely used means of catching fish in the past which made a significant contribution to the economy of many coastal and estuarine communities.

An exploratory dive has already been undertaken by a scientific diver. A section of the fish-trap is buried in the sand and visibility was very poor. The rocks forming the trap are now covered in worms, algae and sea anemones.

[*source* : http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/7948176.stm]

Fish-traps are also found on the coast of India. One such fish-trap in Gujarat, on the island of Shankhoddhar (Popularly known as Bet Dwarka), was misinterpreted by Indian archaeologists as fortification wall of an ancient settlement and was erroneously dated to mid second millennium BCE. Many such fish-traps can be seen at a number of sites on Gujarat and Maharashtra coasts.



Notes for Contributors

Sanatan has become one of the fastest medium to share information on recent researches and expert views with a large number of professionals in related fields. Time to time we have informed our members about the contributions to *Sanatan*. With every issue our members are increasing and we keep getting communications in this regard.

Sanatan is an OPEN ACADEMIC FORUM where one can share any news or views which one feels would be of use to people in the field or researchers in allied subjects. You may send information on diverse subjects and in various formats. They may include —

Research articles	Short notes on recent discoveries
Reinterpretations	Important publications
Comments on vital issues	Views and photographs
News of general interest	Information on seminar and conferences
Reports on academic events	Invitation for contributing papers, etc.

It attempts to have frequent exchange of information among all those working in related fields for their benefit and in turn for the development of disciplines. All the members are therefore requested to keep sending their contributions for inclusion in bulletin and the annual issue.

Send your views, information, materials to sanatan08082008@gmail.com for sharing.